

BRACKNELL HOPES DASHED BY STRIKERS

THE smooth skills of Tony Price and Tony Horseman's ability to snap up the half chance dumped brave Bracknell Town out of this season's Berks and Bucks Senior Cup in Sunday's quarter final at Larges Lane.

These two players, one starting a brilliant career and the other ending his, each scored two goals to emphasise the gap in class between the two clubs. Price, especially, looked a player of the highest ability. Tony has been playing for Leicester City reserves recently and looked a lot stronger than on his last appearance in October.

The coolness in scoring his goals, his ability to work at close quarters and the superb ball control was a joy to watch. He will soon be studying at Oxford University and could well become a regular member of the side next term. A real asset. "Bodger" Horseman just goes on and on. His goal tally this term now reads an impressive 29. When Tony does eventually decide to hang up those well-worn boots, Wycombe will undoubtedly have to search hard to find such a prolific replacement.

But while various individuals stood out in this game, the overall team performance was poor. Wanderers would point to the pitch, and quite rightly so. Their free-flowing style was immediately blunted by the sodden turf, which made any brand of football difficult. Full credit too, must go to Bracknell.

They were not the side of last year when they gave Wycombe the fright of their lives in the same competition. But, their workrate was excellent, and each player ran himself into the

ground. Defensively they were quite sound and well served by towering centre half John Adams. Their main failing, however, was upfront, where only winger Scott looked at all dangerous.

Apart from the inclusion of Price at Dylan Evans's expense, Wanderers made a couple of other team changes. Rob Williams took over from Terry Reardon in midfield while Phil Wood switched to the vacated full back position and Keith Mead wore the number four shirt.

The Mead-Wood switch looked a good one. Although rarely tested, Wood looked at home at full back while Mead and Bullock made sure nothing got through the middle, especially in the air.

Price gave notice of his intentions as early as the third minute when he fired in a half volley following a long throw by Bullock. Sixty seconds later he laid on the opening goal. Taking the ball into the Bracknell box he centred firmly across the face of goal. Goalkeeper John Elder

couldn't hold the ball and Horseman pounced in a flash to stab it home.

Price almost made it two in the seventh minute when he again worked his way through the home rearguard. From a narrow angle he measured a shot at the gap between Elder and the post, only to see his drive cannot off the upright to safety.

These early attacks put Wanderers firmly in command. The Bracknell defence looked woefully suspect and nervous as Wycombe pressed forward and it was not until the 11th minute that the "Newtowners" produced their first effort at goal. A neat string of passes lead to Mathews trying a header which Maskell managed to save with some difficulty.

There was an unusual occurrence in the 18th minute when Roger Grant went to pick the ball up for a throw-in but did so when it was still in play and hadn't crossed the line. The referee was on the spot to award a free kick to Bracknell.

After their early supremacy, the Blues went slowly off the

boil. They struggled to stamp any mark in midfield despite the efforts of Rob Williams and Bracknell fought their way back into the game for a while. Adams always looked dangerous from dead ball situations, although Town struggled to mount any concerted attacks on the visitors.

Then, in the 29th minute, Price put Wanderers 2-0 up. Horseman made the goal, returning the complement for the opening score, with a delicate chip over the defence. Despite having three or four defenders around him, Price had seemingly all the time in the world to slot the ball home for a goal of the highest class.

Mick Mathews wasted a good opportunity to reduce the leeway when he side-stepped the Wycombe defence but fired high over goal and in the 34th minute Scott raced through on the blind side of the visitors' rearguard but fired straight across the goalface.

As the half progressed, Wanderers' distribution and

passing deteriorated. They only threatened occasionally but their real superiority was finishing. And sure enough, one minute before the break, they added a third goal.

Grant took a free kick on the left and hit the ball long, to the far post. The tall Neil Armitage was back to help his defence from midfield but only got in the way of 'keeper Elder who dropped the ball at the feet of Horseman. "Bodger" doesn't waste opportunities like that.

Wycombe opened the new half with two quick corners but was was Bracknell who emerged as the better side after the interval — and continued to do so for about 20 minutes. Their build-ups were often slow but they almost pulled a goal back when Scott curled the ball just over from the edge of the box.

In the 68th minute they earned their reward for a workmanlike performance. Scott's left foot corner was headed on at the near post and Mathews prodded the ball home from close range. For a time,

Bracknell fostered hopes of pulling back even further. But every time, the finish just wasn't forthcoming and it was Wanderers who always looked more likely to go further ahead.

This was typified when Steve Perrin, who didn't look happy as the "target" man all afternoon, produced one flash of brilliance. Picking up Mead's free kick, he flicked the ball cleverly over one defender and caught it full on the volley, flashing a superb shot just over the top. A minute later "that man" Price put the result beyond doubt. The ball was centred from the flank, Horseman missed it as it came across and there was price, unmarked, to steer the ball home from ten yards.

The goal took a good deal of steam out of Bracknell. Graham Mackenzie replaced Pritchard, strangely out of touch recently, and Wanderers made a final assault on the home net. Horseman saw one effort saved by Elder at the second attempt after good work by Hollifield and then "Bodger" drove another Hollifield centre across the face of the goal.

In the last seconds, Perrin produced the most powerful of the day after a "headed" 1-2 between Price and Horseman. The ball fell straight to Perrin who hammered it at Elder from close range, the 'keeper saving brilliantly.

BRACKNELL: J. Elder; R. Elderfield, A. Jeffries, D. Brown, J. Adams; A. Parker, S. McDurg, N. Armitage; M. Mathews, J. Woodcock, F. Scott. Sub. B. McLean (not used).

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Wood, K. Mead, D. Bullock, F. Grant, R. Williams, L. Pritchard (sub. G. Mackenzie 80 mins.), M. Hollifield; A. Horseman, S. Penn, A. Price.

Half time: 0-3. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Horseman 2 (4, 44), Price 2 (29, 70).